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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In view of the amendments and remarks herein, favorable reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested. By this Amendment, claims 1-14 have been canceled and new claims 15-34 have been added.

With respect to the drawing objection, Applicant has submitted a proposed drawing correction herewith in order to correct the misspelling in Fig. 19. With respect to the claim objections and rejections under 35 USC 112 & 101, Applicant believes that the new claims have been written in a manner that obviates these matters.

Claims 1-9 and 11-14 have been rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious over ICQ. Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over ICQ in view of McSheffrey. For at least the following reasons, Applicant believes that the new claims herein are not rendered obvious by the cited prior art. Thus, consideration and allowance of the new claims are respectfully requested.

In accordance with new claim 15, a plurality of players are previously registered to a game server. The game server provides a game for a first game apparatus belonging to a first player who has logged-in through a communication network out of the plurality of players. In the provided game, a plurality of characters are respectively operated by the plurality of players. In providing the game, the game server transmits to the first game apparatus log-in identification information for identifying log-in/log-out with regard to each of the plurality of characters. The game server also transmits to the first game apparatus, irrespective of log-in/log-out, property information in which what property

each of the plurality of characters has in a game world is described. At a time of receiving from the first game apparatus first operation information indicative of a first operation directed to a specific character being in a log-out state out of the plurality of characters, the game server transmits a log-in operation request to a second game apparatus belonging to a second player who operates the specific character.

~~Transmitting the log-in identification information to the first game apparatus~~

allows the first player to easily find out the specific character being in the log-out state out of the plurality of characters. Furthermore, transmitting the property information to the first game apparatus allows the first player to recognize what property the specific character has in a fictional world that is the game world. Therefore, the first player is able to determine whether or not the first operation directed to the specific character should be performed without destroying a fantasy of the game world. Applicant respectfully submits that the combination of features set forth in new claim 15 is not taught or suggested by the prior art or record.

In accordance with new claim 26, a game is acquired from a game server by a log-in operation through a communication network. In the acquired game, a plurality of characters are respectively operated by a plurality of players previously registered. A game apparatus outputs each of the plurality of characters in a different manner corresponding to log-in/log-out. The game apparatus also outputs, irrespective of log-in/log-out, property information in which what property each of the plurality of characters has in a game world is described. When a first operation directed to a specific

character being in a log-out state is performed, the game apparatus requests the game server to transmit a log-in operation request to a game apparatus belonging to a player who operates the specific character. The game apparatus which received the log-in operation request outputs a message. Outputting each of the plurality of characters in a different manner corresponding to log-in/log-out allows the player to easily find out the specific character being in the log-out state out of the plurality of characters.

Furthermore, outputting the property information allows the player to recognize what property the specific character has in a fictional world that is the game world. Therefore, the player is able to determine whether or not the first operation directed to the specific character should be performed without destroying a fantasy of the game world.

Applicant respectfully submits that this combination of features is also not disclosed or suggested in the prior art.

In contrast to the new claims, ICQ discloses to publish a property of a user itself, such as an ICQ number or an instant messenger address. ICQ fails to disclose or remotely suggest anything about publishing the property information of the character which appears in the game world, making an appearance the specific character being in the log-out state in the game world, or requesting the log-in operation by the first operation directed to the specific character. For at least these reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that neither of new claims 15 or 26 are rendered unpatentable by ICQ. Moreover, McSheffrey fails to make up for the deficiencies of ICQ. This reference discloses to progress a game by exchanging an E-mail to which MOVE data is

attached. McSheffrey fails to disclose or remotely suggest anything about publishing the property information of the character which appears in the game world, making an appearance the specific character being in the log-out state in the game world, or requesting the log-in operation by the first operation directed to the specific character.

With regard to a combination of ICQ and McSheffrey et al., as described above,
~~neither reference discloses or even remotely suggest anything about publishing the~~

property information of the character which appears in the game world, making an appearance the specific character being in the log-out state in the game world, or requesting the log-in operation by the first operation directed to the specific character.

Thus, Applicant respectfully submits that the combined teachings of the cited references fail to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness under Section 103 for either of new claims 15 or 26.

New claims 23-25 are similar to new claim 15, except for a difference of a category, and new claims 32-34 are similar to new claim 26, except for the difference of the category. Accordingly, it is believed that these claims are also allowable for substantially the same reasons described above.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant believes that all of the new claims clearly and patentably distinguish the prior art of record and are in condition for allowance. Thus, withdrawal of the rejections and allowance of this case is respectfully requested.

NAKAI

Appl. No. 10/028,311

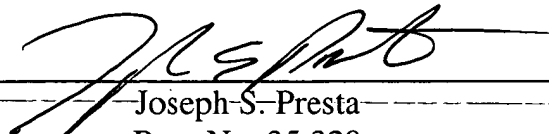
February 12, 2004

Should the Examiner have any questions, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the phone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

NIXON & VANDERHYE P.C.

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